

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 IO-10 ACDA-05 OMB-01 AID-05 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 MC-02 IGA-01 /078 W

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P R 131055Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9170

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR IN, PK, QUXS

SUBJECT: INDIAN CHARGES OF PAK BELLICOSITY

REF: A. STATE 55557

B. STATE 52784

1. EMBASSY ASSUMES THAT ONE PARTICULAR STATEMENT BY PRIME MINISTER BHUTTO WHICH MAY HAVE TRIGGERED MRS. GANDHI'S AND FORMIN CHAVAN'S REMARKS THAT PAKISTAN IS MORE BELLICOSE

SINCE LIFTING OF US ARMS EMBARGO CONTAINED IN LEW SIMONS' ARTICLE IN MARCH 6 WASHINGTON POST. TEXT OF ARTICLE FURNISHED US BY USIA CONTAINS LEAD SENTENCE "PAKISTAN WOULD CONSIDER GOING TO WAR AGAIN OVER THE DISPUTED STATE OF KASHMIR ONLY IF INDIA REJECTED ALL EFFORTS FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT." ANOTHER ARTICLE WHICH MIGHT HAVE CAUSED INDIAN CONCERN WAS THE MARCH 8 ACCOUNT, TAKEN FROM AFP, IN BALTIMORE SUN (REF B) WHICH REPORTED PAK INTEREST IN THE F-5 AIRCRAFT.

2. IN ADDITION, WHILE PAPER

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GANDHI AND CHAVAN SPOKE ON MARCH 10, INDIANS MIGHT NOW

ALSO POINT TO ANOTHER SIMONS' ARTICLE IN MARCH 10
WASHINGTON POST, BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH BHUTTO AND
TIKKA KHAN, WHICH DEALS WITH THE PAK ARMS SHOPPING LIST.(

TIKKA REPORTEDLY TOLD SIMONS THAT PAKS WOULD LIKE TO
BUY, INTER ALIA, M-60 TANKS, F-5 AIRCRAFT, AND SUB-
MARINES, ALL OF WHICH COULD BE CALLED OFFENSIVE WEAPONS.
HE WENT ON TO SAY, HOWEVER, THAT HE DIDN'T KNOW IF
PAKS COULD AFFORD SUCH WEAPONS.

3. IN ADDITION TO ITEMS CITED ABOVE, INDIAN CONCERNs
THAT PAKS INCREASINGLY AGGRESSIVE OF LATE MAY IN PART
REFLECT THEIR

INTERPRETATION OF THE FOLLOWING:

FEBRUARY CRACKDOWN ON MAIN PAK OPPOSITION PARTY (NAP);
GOP'S CHARGE THAT AFGHANISTAN INVOLVED IN TERRORIST
ACTIVITIES IN FRONTIER PROVINCE (INCLUDING, OF COURSE,
THAT THEY SHARE IN BLAME FOR KILLING NWFP MINISTER
SHERPAO); AND, THEREAFTER, SUGGESTIONS BY SOME GOP
OFFICIALS AND POLITICIANS THAT GOP RETALIATE FOR WHAT
THEY SEE AS AFGHAN INVOLVEMENT IN PAK INTERNAL AFFAIRS.

4. WE HAVE GIVEN ABOVE SUCH ITEMS AS WE CAN THINK OF
THAT THE INDIANS MIGHT SEIZE ON TO JUSTIFY THEIR CON-
TENTION THAT BHUTTO HAS BECOME MORE BELLOCOSE SINCE
THE ARMS EMBARGO WAS LIFTED. HOWEVER, OUR GENERAL FEELING
IS THAT THIS INDIAN CHARGE IS PROBABLY BASED MORE ON
WHAT THEY HAVE EXPECTED TO HAPPEN THAN WHAT HAS IN FACT
HAPPENED.

5. IN FACT, BHUTTO, BOTH IN HIS PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS
IN WASHINGTON AND SINCE HIS RETURN HERE, HAS BEEN SAYING,
ON THE MOST PART, MANY OF WHAT WE CONSIDER TO BE THE
RIGHT THINGS. HE HAS TAKEN THE LINE BOTH PUBLICLY AND
BEFORE OUR CONGRESSIONAL COMMITTEES THAT BECAUSE PAKISTAN
IS NOW NO MORE THAN THE SIZE OF ONE OF INDIA'S PROVINCES,
IT COULD NOT POSSIBLY THINK ANY MORE IN TERMS OF A
BALANCE OF FORCES WITH INDIA, THUS ANY IDEA OF AN
ARMS RACE IS COMPLETELY IMPRACTICAL AND UNREALISTIC.

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6. FURTHER, BHUTTO WROTE TO INDIRA GANDHI ON HIS OWN
INITIATIVE AFTER RETURNING TO PAKISTAN, AND, IN A CON-
CILIATORY MANNER, NOTED HIS REGRET THAT PUBLIC REACTION
HAD BEEN SO ADVERSE IN INDIA AND STRESSED HIS CONTINUED
HOPES AND RESOLVE THAT, UNDER THE SIMLA PROCESS,
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES COULD BE INCREASINGLY
IMPROVED.

7. OUR REVIEW OF ALL OF BHUTTO'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS
WITHIN THE PAST MONTH, INCLUDING THE IMPORTANT TELEVISION
APPEARANCE MARCH 10 WHICH WAS DEVOTED PRIMARILY TO
FOREIGN POLICY, TURNS UP NOTHING WHICH WE WOULD CHARACTERIZE
AS BRAVADO RESULTING FROM A RECENT FOREIGN POLICY
VICTORY.
BYROADE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN POLICY POSITION, MILITARY POLICIES, POLITICAL SITUATION, KASHMIR
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 13 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975ISLAMA02188
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750088-0025
From: ISLAMABAD
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750355/aaaabxfr.tel
Line Count: 122
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 STATE 55557
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 04 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <04 AUG 2003 by ShawDG>; APPROVED <24 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: INDIAN CHARGES OF PAK BELLICOSITY
TAGS: PFOR, IN, PK
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006